Shadows Of What We Are

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Shadows Of What We Are

by Smuternatural

Summary

Will enters therapy for his nightmares. Hannibal's life is forever changed.

Hors d'oeuvre

It doesn't matter how hard his legs work to carry him through the woods, the shadow is always right behind him. His heart hammers in his chest, sweat stinging his eyes but he can't stop. He can't stop. It's right behind him.

Fleetingly, he notices clouds float over the moon, drenching him in absolute darkness. A branch catches his cheek, splitting open his hot skin. Blood trickles down his face and his thighs burn. He hears the shadow shriek and quicken its pace. He loses his footing, tripping over a thick tree root and falls face first into the snow.

He's cold. Dead leaves and frozen mud are caked to his hands and the side of his face. He knows it's there. He knows it's going to kill him. He knows it's going to eat him.

He wants it to.

Kneeling in the mud, he turns his head and let's out a shuddering breath. The shadow approaches slowly. Its elongated fingers reach out and trace the cut on his cheek. Something akin to a smile spreads across its face as he slips the bloody digit into its mouth.

"Delicious," it whispers into the dark.

A howl cuts through the night like a knife before the shadow opens its mouth wide and lunges at his neck.

"And, I guess that's it. It always ends there." Will shifts uncomfortably in the leather chair. He knows his time is almost up. He spent the beginning of the hour wringing his hands and avoiding eye contact from the man across from him.

"You say you're running from your shadow-"

"It's not my shadow," Will immediately defends.

"My apologies," Hannibal says, bowing his head sightly towards Will. "You're running from the shadow but are you also running towards something? Safety perhaps or just simply away?"

"Away I think? I'm--I don't know. I mean, I'm scared. I can feel my heart racing when I wake up. I'm drenched in sweat. Hot and cold at the same time. But," Will trails off, picking at something invisible on the pristine chair.

"What aren't you telling me, Will?"

Will sighs and looks over his therapist shoulder. "I think--I'm not sure, but it feels like," his knuckles grip the leather arm, leaving blunt marks in the material, "I want it to catch me." The confession makes his chest tighten and he squirms in his seat. "What kind of person wants to be caught by a monster?" he whispers mostly to himself.

Hannibal uncrosses his legs and leans forward.

Will can smell his cologne.

"Being attracted to dark things does not make us inherently dark. Humans are curious beings. Take literature and films for example: Do you read or watch horror for the thrill of it, or to take notes?" Hannibal offers a small smile.

Will rolled his eyes and stared at the black model of a stag behind Hannibal's head.

"Horror movies are a terrible guide for any aspiring killer," he chuckled. "Leave one hair or finger print behind and you're toast. I always wondered why they never wore gloves. Or, I dunno- plastic suits or something."

Hannibal's finger twitched, so briefly Will almost missed it.

"Our time is up," Hannibal announced quietly as he closed the notebook on his lap. He sat back in his chair and studied Will's face. "Since it is the end of our first session I always ask my patients if they would like to book an appointment for next week or if they'd rather not continue. I think I can help you see your nightmares for what they are, and work through them."

Will wiped his hands down his thighs nervously. "If you'll have me, yes. I'd like this to be a regular occurrence."

Hannibal nodded once and rose from his seat, walking over to his desk. Will watched his long finger trail down the appointment book until it stopped and tapped a square.

"Are evenings alright?" When Will nodded, Hannibal picked up a black pen and wrote Will's name into the empty slot. When Hannibal turned around, Will was standing behind him, close enough that he could see the day old stubble on the young man's jaw.

"I'll see you next week at 7:30." Hannibal nodded once and held this hand toward the door. Will picked up his jacket and smiled as Hannibal led him to the exit.

"Thank you, Doctor Lecter. I can't wait."

Will shut his apartment door and tossed his belongings on the floor. He fished his phone out of his pocket as he walked to the fridge and grabbed a bottle of water. He set a reminder in

his phone for the next appointment, not that he'd need it. He was already anticipating how the conversation would go. The look on Hannibal's face when Will divulged more details about his nightmares. The softness in his eyes when Will fidgeted uncomfortably. He smiled to himself, stuffing his phone away and heading towards his bedroom.

He clicked on the desk lamp and sighed contently as the room lit up. The yellow light gleamed off the photos plastering his wall.

Bulletin boards, newspaper articles, printed off essays, and Polaroid pictures covered every inch of his bedroom. Each one pinned delicately in place in a sort of timeline.

Hannibal's graduation announcement from a medical school in France. His drawings and literature from John's Hopkins. A photo of the outside of Lecters office. Another of the doctor purchasing flowers and fresh fruit at a farmers market. A clipping from the newspaper labeling him "Baltimore's Most Eligible Bachelor" with a blonde woman on his arm with her face scratched out.

Will stroked a finger down the photo, smiling back at Hannibal.

"Until next week Doctor," Will whispered before clicking off the light.

Appetizer

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He's running again.

Though this time, he knows it's not as fast as he can. He's barely sprinting but his lungs still burn. Something buzzes at the base of his skull- a momentary thought.

"What if?"

What if he stopped? What if the shadow caught up to him? What if he let *himself be consumed?*

His cheek is split open by a wayward twig.

The shadow screams at the smell of iron in the air.

The clouds covered the moon as it always does and he's blind. He knows there's a tree root coming and does nothing to avoid it. He feels it catch his boot and waits for the freezing mud to squish between his fingers.

Climbing to his hands and knees, he turns to face to shadow.

It smiles in the wicked way Will secretly loves and reaches out to graze his cheek. He closes his eyes and relishes the phantom heat sliding across his face, leaning into the embrace.

A drop of blood is sucked into the shadows mouth, and this time it moans.

"Delicious," it hisses. Will's stomach flips and his heart thrums like a hummingbird in his chest. He's afraid, but more than that, he's curious.

Will stares at the shadow, knowing its next move. He leans back on the balls of his feet and faces it head on.

"Want another taste?" he grits out, biting back the tremble in his voice.

The shadow halts. Surprised. Instead of lunging forward with its jaws unhinged, it slinks forward slowly. Will can feel an aura of heat envelope him as its limbs force him to stand. Will stares into the void where eyes should be, seeing only darkness. The shadow leans forward, a slick tongue protruding from its mouth, and licks the wound on Wills face.

Will goes stock still as he lets the shadow taste him, licking slowly. The only sounds in the woods are his heart and the slide of skin on skin. The blunt pressure of teeth on his jaw sends a jolt of electricity down his spine and he groans quietly.

"More," Will demands.

Teeth pierce his neck and Will screams.

Will wakes up hot and hard. Before he's fully conscious his palm is pressing against his erection, groaning at the memory of the shadow. He works himself furiously, visions of his therapist swirling with his nightmare. He comes with a grunt and Hannibal's name in the back of his mind.

Hannibal is sitting at the desk in his office, journal open in front of him. He hasn't written a word in it, too preoccupied with his thoughts to put it to paper.

This has never happened to him before. Hannibal prides himself on keeping a distant, but clinical, interest in his patients. He wouldn't want another Franklyn on his hands.

But Will Graham was different, which was very unfortunate for the good doctor.

The boy found him two weeks ago, claiming he was experiencing anxiety from his nightmares. Will was vague on how he came to find him, stating he heard about him from a friend. Will clearly was a troubled young man- twitchy, shut down when asked personal questions, and most definitely on the spectrum but able to hide it well. Quiet, extremely smart, and Hannibal assumed he was probably abused early in life.

All of this should be going into the journal but Hannibal couldn't bring himself to write it down. He closed the book when he heard his next appointment come into the waiting room. He stowed Will's empty book in his desk and tended to his next patient.

Will sat in class, utterly bored. He tapped his pen on the desk rapidly as he watched the clock. The hands moved in slow motion as Professor Bloom droned on about psychopathology and substance abuse.

"Nearly a hundred three to seven year olds diagnosed with ADHD and their parents were studied in 1995. Biological mothers were administered interviews to assess ADHD in their children and mood, anxiety, and substance use disorders in themselves. Diagnosed children's parents were associated with maternal mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and stimulant dependence such as cocaine. Children with ADHD also reported increased drinking problems in their biological fathers."

Will snorted at that, drawing the attention of Dr. Bloom.

"Something to add, Mr. Graham?" she asked, crossing her arms.

"You're blaming the children," Will mumbled, staring down at his notebook. His classmates eyes were all on him.

"Sorry?" Alana raised an eyebrow.

Will cleared his throat and squirmed in his chair. "The study is blaming the children for something they have no control over. If you're born different, you're branded a difficult child. Mommy and daddy can't handle little Timmy's mood swings or the compulsion to touch everything so they snort and drink whatever they get their hands on. Children who have fathers with substance abuse problems are at increased risk for psychopathology such as ADHD, OCD, and anxiety disorders. And are we going to gloss over the fact that children with addicted parents are also more prone to physical abuse, resulting in psychological disorders later in life?" Will scoffed and closed his notebook. "You might as well damn children as soon as their born."

The bell rang, signaling the end of class. Will's classmates rose and gathered their things quietly as Dr. Bloom continued to stare at Will.

Will packed his things away and stood, hiking the strap of his bag over his shoulder.

"Will," Alana said quietly, gesturing to him to come to her desk.

He sighed and shuffled down to her. "I'm not being abused, if that's what you're going to ask," he muttered, cheeks turning pink.

Dr. Bloom smiled softly. "If you were, or are, I can help with that."

Will stiffened, gripping the strap tightly. "I'm not," he bit out.

Alana nodded. "Alright. But Will, if you ever need someone to talk to---"

"Dr. Bloom, I appreciate what you're trying to do. I really do. But," he took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "I'm---I'm already seeing a therapist. For other reasons. I'm not---abused."

A genuine smile crossed his teachers face. "That's wonderful, Will. I'm glad."

"You might know him, actually. Dr. Lecter."

Alana's smile faded as she pressed her lips together. "I do. I was his mentee in college."

Will smiled at her mood change. "He's pretty great. Really smart, doesn't press for information. Just kinda lets me talk when I want to."

"Will, I didn't mean to press---"

"It's fine," Will waved her off with a hand. "I actually have to get going. I have an appointment tonight. Goodnight, professor." Will turned and took the steps two at a time.

"Will," Alana called from her desk. Will turned his head as he approached the door, eyebrows raised. "Be careful, alright?"

Will flashed her a toothy smile and nodded, shoving the door open.

Hannibal knew the moment Will entered the waiting room. The boy had a light step, but the doctor picked up on Will's telltale sigh as he sat down in the same crushed velvet chair as last time.

He set his iPad down and closed the cover before stuffing it in a drawer. Straightening his tie and smoothing out his jacket, Hannibal walked to the door and opened it wide.

"Good evening, Will. Please, come in."

Will walked briskly into the office and tossed his bag on the chaise lounge and ran a frustrated hand through his hair.

"Something troubling you, Will?" Hannibal asked, taking his usual seat. He watched a snarl grace his patients lip.

"You could say that." With his back to the doctor, Will stared at the wall of books and journals. "Which one is mine?"

Hannibal shifted in his chair slightly. "Yours is in my desk."

"Not interesting enough to grace your wall, doctor?" Will held his arms tight around himself. "Dr. Bloom seems to think I'm interesting enough. Thinks I'm *abused,"* he spat.

"Will," Hannibal said quietly. When the boy turned around, his eyes were red rimmed and glossy. "Tell me what happened. Was Alana---"

"Alana," Will laughed. "First name basis I see." Will cocked his head and slowly made his way to the chair across from Hannibal. His fingers dug into the leather as he eyed the doctor. "That's right, she mentioned that you two knew each other. You were her mentor."

Hannibal nodded. "She was. An excellent student, and now teacher."

Will scoffed and hunched his shoulders, looking down at his feet. "In class today, she basically said it's childrens with disorders fault that their parents are drug addicts and abusive. Then had the audacity to ask me if I was being abused. Can you believe that?" His eyes shot up to the doctors, eyebrows raised in question.

Hannibal stared at the boy. He wasn't going to take the bait. "I only believe what you tell me. If you say you aren't or weren't abused, I'll believe you. But this will only work if you're honest with me." Will didn't respond. "Are you angry because you believe Dr. Bloom has no sympathy for the abused children?"

"Oh I'm sure she has plenty. It's just the way she said it. It---struck a nerve," Will confessed. Will rounded the chair and sat down gingerly. "I wasn't abused," he said adamantly. "My mom didn't stick around to see how I'd turn out, so don't even ask."

"And your father?" Hannibal asked, watching the boys leg bounce nervously.

Will huffed a laugh through his nose and intertwined his fingers. "Dad raised me as well as he knew how. Moved us around a lot. Drank a lot." Will's eyes flicked up to the doctors. "He never touched me, though."

Sitting forward, Hannibal rested his folded hands on his thighs. "What about in loving ways? A pat on the back for a job well done, or an embrace when you came home from school?"

Will leveled a look at Hannibal. "If you're asking if my daddy hugged me enough, the answer is no. We weren't---close. We lived together, worked together. But we weren't affectionate."

"Being denied affection is just as damaging to a child's psyche as physical or mental abuse. That abuse that can cause social anxiety, insomnia and sleep disturbances." Will shook his head and stood quickly. "How are your nightmares, Will?"

Will laughed outright at that as he made his way down the wall of books. "Same as usual. I'm running, the shadow catches up with me, and then," Will shrugs. "Last nights was a little different though."

"How so?"

Will hung his head, cheeks flaming as he remembered the feel of the shadows tongue sliding along his face. "Um, I let it catch me. When I fell, I didn't try to defend myself. He---it," he corrected, "it licked the blood from my cheek." Will reached up and traced the path of the shadows tongue.

Hannibal swallowed thickly, crossing and uncrossing his legs. "How did that make you feel?"

"It felt---" Will's chest rose and fell quickly, his neck burning, "right. I--I told it to. He usually just swipes it away and then lunges at me, then I wake up. This time, it was like I was in control of the dream. I told him to taste me and when he did I got," Will cursed under his breath and gripped the tightening fabric of his jeans.

"You were aroused," Hannibal finished for him.

"What kind of psycho gets off on that?" Will whispered.

Hannibal stood and walked behind Will, looking over the boys shoulder to his hands. They were white knuckling the denim around his thighs, making his erection even more pronounced. "It's not unusual, Will. Nothing to be embarrassed over. Fear and lust can go hand in hand. Dangerous situations can stimulate parts of our brain that are usually used for arousal."

"So you're saying that it's alright that I woke up achingly hard after the shadow took a chunk out of my neck?" Will scoffed.

Hannibal took in a quiet, but sharp breath. A hand slipped into his slacks pocket. "Quite," he said darkly.

Will turned around and faced the doctor, their bodies far too close. "And if I got myself off on the memory in the morning?"

Licking his lips, Hannibal took a step back. "Quite normal, as well. You're letting the shadow consume you in more ways than one. Literally opening yourself up to your fears, which is progress."

"I can't stop thinking about it," Will whispered, taking a step forward.

Hannibal cleared his throat. "And after he bit you, in the dream, what happened?"

"I screamed," Will answered, his eyes looking up into the doctors. "I screamed so loud I think I woke the forest. It was so painful but it felt *so* good. The feel of his teeth ripping through my flesh. Hot blood pulsing into his mouth and down my neck. God, Hannib---" Will stopped himself and closed his eyes. "I'm sorry."

"It's quite alright," Hannibal said quietly. He could see Will's heartbeat thrumming in his carotid, a bead of sweat sliding slowly over it. He smelled of fear and lust and his hands were trembling. "We should allow ourselves these fantasies. Let our subconsciousness play out, in whatever means necessary, whether it be defeating our fears, or letting them inside."

Will's eyes opened slowly, his eyelashes fluttering. "I prefer letting him in," he whispered, voice strained and hoarse.

"You've been calling your shadow 'him'. Does this mean you've put a face to the darkness?" Hannibal asked, his hand balling into a fist in his slacks.

"Not yet," Will said darkly. "But he'll come to me soon enough."

"Shh-shh-shh," Hannibal whispered in the dark.

A boy with curly brown hair struggled against the musty motel bed. Leather cuffs held his limbs in place as Hannibal pulled the scalpel between the boys third and fourth rib. He screamed against the rags in his mouth, tears and snot gathering at the edges. Hannibal watched his chest heave as he slipped his gloved hand inside boys chest, firmly gripping his heart.

"Shh, it's alright. You're alright, Will," Hannibal cooed.

The boy shook his head and grunted loudly when the doctor began removing the organ. Hannibal sliced into the aorta and watched the as the light left the boys eyes.

That night, Hannibal stroked himself roughly in the shower, thoughts of sinking his teeth into Will's throat racing through his head. Hot water mimicked the blood he envisioned dripping from his mouth to soak in the hairs of his chest. He came with Will's name on his tongue.

Chapter End Notes

The studies Hannibal and Alana talk about are actual things I've researched, it's not just bullshit I made up.

Salad

It's unfortunate that Polaroid cameras are so loud.

Will has been fond of them ever since his father got him a second hand one for Christmas when he was eleven. Watching the grey, cloudy film develop before his eyes was fascinating. Instant proof of what happened mere seconds before. Whether it be someone blowing out their birthday candles, a forced smile during family reunions, the birth of a new family member, or (Will's favorite) a murder carried out with the grace of a practiced artist.

Instead of his prized camera, Will was forced to use his phone to capture the grainy moments. There's a slit in the blackout curtains that he can peer through. He remains still as a statue, only his finger moves to snap the occasional picture. He's surprised at how careless Hannibal was tonight. A passerby could've seen and damned Hannibal to a life behind bars. *Thank God I'm here, Will thought.* Still, Hannibal was mesmerizing. The way his steady hands expertly opened the young man's chest was beautiful. He doesn't know what the boy did to get on Hannibal's radar, but at this point he doesn't care. He is, however, confused when Hannibal doesn't keep the plump organ in his usual cooler he brings along.

Will followed Hannibal with his phone, marvelling in the way the man moved. His ridiculous, although necessary, plastic suit didn't hinder his movements at all as he posed the body on the motel bed. Hannibal laid the blood soaked boy on his side, if anyone peeked in the window they would simply think he was sleeping. Housekeeping though, they would be blessed with a work of art when they entered the room. The boys eyes were stitched open, eyes downcast, forced to stare at his own heart laying lifeless in his palm. Hannibal stared at the man for a long moment before running his fingers through his sticky, sweat soaked hair. After a minute, he removed his plastic suit and rolled it up tightly, placing it in the empty cooler at the side of the bed.

Will stuffed his phone in his pocket and carefully slid around the corner of the hotel, the shadows cloaking him. He watched as Hannibal climbed into his car and drove away before slinking back to the room. He so badly wants to go in, to take pictures of Hannibal's art. To bask in the horrifically beautiful scene the doctor made. He takes a few more pictures and thinks better of it. He'd have a hard time explaining why his DNA was at a crime scene and Hannibal would know that Will knew. He backs into the shadows again and leaves.

"Will, please come in."

Will smiles as he passes Hannibal, catching the scent of his cologne as he does.

"You seem better this week," the doctor muses as he sits in his chair.

Will nods, still smiling. "I am. I only had a few nightmares this week."

"That's wonderful," Hannibal says, though his tone doesn't match his expression. "Why do you think that might be?"

Will shrugs. "Who knows, maybe I just had a good few nights." Pictures flash in his mind of Hannibal and the curly haired boy. Remembering the tender moment, he runs his fingers through his own hair where Hannibal touched the dead boy. "Got to bed late last night, but I feel rested."

Hannibal watches a curl fall into Will's eyes and his fingers itch to brush it away. "Keeping a sleep schedule is very important. What keeps you up at night, Will? Besides the nightmares."

Will's lip curls up into a smile as he looks over his shoulder, eyes landing on Hannibal's gold plated letter opener. "All kinds of things," he says flippantly, shrugging a shoulder. "Interactions I've had throughout the day. Sometimes it feels like I bring people home with me, in here," he taps his temple. He turns back to Hannibal who is also looking at the letter opener. It bares a striking resemblance to the scalpel he used in the hotel. Will sighs and leans forward. "Did you see the news? The guy who was killed in the hotel room?"

Hannibal crossed his legs. "I did. A tragedy."

Will nodded and looked down at his shoes. "Young guy, too. About my age I think they said."

"Is there a reason you brought it up, Will?" Hannibal asked.

"The night I saw it on the news I couldn't sleep. Every time I closed my eyes, I swear I could see what he saw. From the crime scene photos that Freddie Lounds leaked, I was able to put together what happened. It was like---" Will's breath caught in his throat, suddenly feeling overwhelmed and hot.

"Like what, Will?" Hannibal pressed.

Will wiped his palms on his pants and hung his head. "Like it was me. Like I was the boy being changed." He looked up at Hannibal through his lashes. "Like I was the one giving my heart away to a killer."

Hannibal swallowed thickly and looked down at the notebook in his lap, trying to compose himself. "What do you mean by change?"

"That's what he's doing, the killer. He changes the victims. He makes them something *more*. Something to be *proud* of." Will's eyes glaze over as he stares past Hannibal. The paint

chipped door appears behind Hannibal's head and opens slowly, revealing the bloody boy. "He didn't belong to anyone. No one would even know he was missing. He---" Will cocks his head when he hears a creak in the floorboards, "he's a runaway. Sells his body for money. Steals what he can to survive." The dead boys eyes roll and meet Wills. *I'm you. You're me. We're the same.* Will shakes his head even though he knows it's true.

"Will?" Hannibal's voice carries through the fog of his mind. "Come back, Will."

Will blinks slowly, his vision coming into focus. Hannibal in crouched in front of him, one hand resting softly on his knee. He doesn't look worried, more curious than anything. "Sorry. I---sometimes I get lost."

"It's quite alright." Hannibal lifts his hand from Will's knee and lifts it to his forehead. Will's eyes widen at the touch. "You have a fever, Will. Does your head hurt?"

Will scoffs and looks down at the pleat in Hannibal's slacks. "When doesn't it?" Without thinking Will reaches up and slips his fingers gently around the doctors wrist, biting back a smile when he feels his pulse quicken. His eyes flicker to Hannibal's lips and back to his eyes.

Hannibal slowly lowers his hand back to Will's knee. "Did you drive here tonight?" When Will nods, Hannibal releases Will's knee and stands. "It's not safe for you to be driving in your condition. You might, as you say, get lost again. I can't risk you getting into an accident." Hannibal walks to the entrance and grabs their coats. "I insist you allow me to drive you home tonight, Will."

Will's face flushes red. "Oh, umm, I don't think that's---"

"Please," is all Hannibal says. He gestures to Will and slips the man's coat over his shoulders once he is close enough. Will ducks his head to hide a smile as he exits the office. They walk to the car in silence. Once inside and warm, Will opens his mouth to give Hannibal directions.

"I live at---"

"Have you eaten yet?" Hannibal begins at the same time.

Will bites his tongue and shakes his head. "No, uh, I didn't have time between class and our session. I usually eat after."

Hannibal hums. "Did you have dinner plans?"

Will's laugh fills the car and makes Hannibal's heart thump harder. "If by plans you mean reheating two day old pizza, yeah."

Hannibal's fingers grip the steering wheel tight. The thought alone makes him flush with anger. "Allow me to cook you dinner. I haven't eaten either and I find myself famished."

Will turns to face Hannibal. "Um, I don't know. I wouldn't want to impose. You're already giving me a ride and I don't want you to feel like you have to---"

"Please, Will. I offered. It's no imposition." Hannibal glances at Will and offers him a small smile. The shadows of lamp posts and street signs darken his face and Will's heart skips a beat.

"Ok. Yeah, sure. Thank you doctor," Will says meekly.

"Please, call me Hannibal."

Main Course

Will scuffed his boots on the mat outside Hannibal's house as well as he could. The thought of tracking snow and mud into the doctor's house was almost unbearable. He'd only ever seen glimpses of the man's home through parted curtains and from what he could tell, cleanliness was paramount.

Hannibal smiled as he unlocked the front door, hearing Will try to remove what little dirt he had picked up on the sidewalk. He swung the door open and sighed, relieved to be somewhere comforting after such a charged car ride. It took all his willpower to keep his hands on the wheel and not touch the young man next to him.

"Please, Will, let me take your coat," Hannibal offered once they were inside. He hung his long wool coat on a sterling peg before reaching for Will's. He let his fingers slide brazenly over the man's shoulders, applying the slightest pressure as he peeled the coat off. He knew the shiver that wracked through Will's body had nothing to do with the cold and the thought made his pulse race. Once the coat was hung, Hannibal gestured for Will to follow him into the kitchen.

"Wow," Will whispered, acting as though he'd never seen the giant stainless steel appliances and swirled marble before. "Your home is beautiful."

"Thank you," Hannibal nodded as he plucked a glass from the cupboard. "When is the last time you've taken any pain medication?"

"Sorry?" Will asked, confused.

"For your head Will," Hannibal said, mirth in his voice.

Will scoffed quietly and ran a hand through his semi wet curls. "Oh. Umm, I haven't? Not sense yesterday, or the day before. I can't really remember."

Hannibal nodded and opened another cupboard, taking two pills out of a small white bottle. He filled the glass halfway with water and handed both to Will. "Only Advil, don't worry. Doctors orders," he said with a raised eyebrow.

Will took the glass with a shaky hand and popped the pills into his mouth, swallowing them down with a generous gulp of water.

Hannibal watched the man's Adam apple slide up and down his throat and wondered what it might taste like, warm on his tongue. He blinked and spun on his heel, grabbing an apron off a hook.

"Please tell me you eat meat," he asked as he opened the large silver fridge. He pulled out a large slab of meat and Will immediately wondered who it was, the thought making him grow

hot. Hannibal set it gently on the counter and looked expectantly at Will.

"I do," he nodded, ducking his head slightly. "One of the few things my father and I did together was fish. I know how to make a mean gumbo if you're ever interested," he chuckled, taking another sip of water.

"I would enjoy that. I'm usually the one planning and cooking meals." Hannibal pulled a long, sharp knife from the block and turned it over in his hand, looking at his reflection. "I can't remember the last time someone cooked for me."

"Your wife doesn't cook?" Will asked, regretting it immediately.

Hannibal bit his lower lip as he stopped slicing midway through the piece of meat. "You know I'm not married." Hannibal looked up at the boy, noticing his flushed cheeks and rapidly rising chest. "Must we keep pretending, Will?

Will raised his glass to his mouth to hide his smile. "I suppose not," he muttered before draining his glass.

"Good," Hannibal said, resuming dinner. "Would you like to sous chef?" he asked, gesturing to a few potatoes and carrots on the counter next to him.

Will placed his glass in the sink and washed his hands, tossing the hand towel he used to dry his hands over his shoulder. The motion was one of his favorite things Hannibal did when he was alone in the kitchen, making dinners for one. He noticed Hannibal glance sideways at him before he unsheathed a knife and began cutting.

"Halved or quartered?" Will asked as he absentmindedly popped a piece of carrot in his mouth.

Hannibal stopped seasoning the meat and placed his hands on the counter. He turned to Will and watched the man chew. "So long as you don't finish off the sides before dinner is served, quartered, please."

The slight annoyance in Hannibal's voice made Will swallow involuntarily. He lowered his eyes and frowned. "Sorry Hannibal," Will whispered. The doctor sucked in a breath, barely loud enough for Will to hear, but he heard it. His stomach flipped and his pulse raced. The knife was removed from Will's shaking hand and laid on the counter next to the half chopped vegetables.

"Would you mind," Hannibal said quietly, taking Will's hand in his, "saying my name again?"

Will looked up at Hannibal through his lashes, cheeks pink and eyes wide. "H-Hannibal," Will barely whispered. The grip on his hand tightened as Hannibal pulled the man closer, letting out a sound that Will only heard in his nightmares.

The shadow came into view behind his eyelids, stalking towards him in the moonlight. Only this time, he wasn't running. He was standing stock still, waiting for the shadow to approach

him. No tree roots or snow to immobilize him this time. He closed his eyes as the clouds covered his only source of light.

He shivered at the touch of warm skin. A hand cupped his jaw and tilted his head up. A low hum broke the deafening silence of the forest.

He opened his eyes and let out a whimper at the sight before him. Standing before him was Hannibal, drenched in blood. He felt it smear across his face as the doctor ran his thumb over his bottom lip. Without thinking, he opened his mouth and accepted the warm, wet digit and sucked.

"Delicious," they said together.

"It's you," Will gasped. He looked into Hannibal's eyes and saw the darkness of his dreams, the shadow standing in front of him now.

Hannibal lifted a hand and ran his finger down Will's face. "But you knew that already, didn't you Will?"

He shivered and closed his eyes. "Yes." Will reached a hand up and placed it on the back of Hannibal's neck, pulling him close. "I knew. I think I always knew," he whispered before closing the distance and kissing the doctor.

Hannibal gripped the side of Will's face, using his thumb and pulling down on the young man's chin, forcing him to open wider. He slid his tongue into Will's mouth, moaning when he felt Will harden against his thigh. Will kissed him furiously, sucking and biting at his lips. He squeezed the back of Hannibal's neck in an attempt of power and was shut down immediately.

Hannibal released Will's mouth and quickly spun the boy around, forcing his hips against the counter. He placed a hand on the back of Will's neck and slowly bent him over until his chest was flush with the cool marble. His teeth grazed over the younger mans carotid and licked at it, inhaling deeply. He could smell Will's fear and arousal, mixed with sweat and his body wash. His hands came to rest on Will's hips, digging painfully into the bones.

"You misunderstand Will," Hannibal cooed, teeth sinking into the soft flesh of Will's earlobe. "You are not in charge. Not here, in my home. Do you understand?" Will struggled against him while Hannibal stood behind him calm and collected. "Do not think I don't know what you've been up to, my boy. Slinking around in the night. Taking photos of unsuspecting people. That's very rude, Will. What's to be done about that?"

Will gasped and bucked against Hannibal in vain. "You don't know who you're dealing with," he spat, turning his head to the side. His eyes were wild, pupils dilated and darting around the room.

Hannibal let his full weight press against Will's back, his erection digging into the younger man's ass. Will choked back a moan as Hannibal reached down and cupped his cock.

"I know exactly who I'm dealing with. And I cannot wait to see what you become." Hannibal released Will and smiled when the young man turned around in a rage. His hair was hanging in his eyes, his face red and eyes glaring. "Bellissima," Hannibal whispered. Before Hannibal could reach out to the wild man in front of him, a shrill tone cut through the tension in the air. Will lowered his eyes to Hannibal's pants pocket, cursing whoever dared interrupt this moment. Hannibal's eyes never left Will's as he reached for the ringing phone in his pocket.

"Don't," Will warned.

Hannibal stepped forward and cupped Will's face again. "It's my emergency line. I'm afraid I must." He pulled the phone out and looked at the name. *Alana Bloom* showed on the screen and Will's blood boiled. "I won't be but a moment." He kissed Will's cheek gently and walked into another room for privacy.

Fifteen minutes later Hannibal came back into the kitchen, slipping his coat on.

"I'm terribly sorry Will, but we'll have to---"

He stopped in his tracks at the threshold. The meat and vegetables were put away. The counter was cleaned off and sparkling. Then only think askew was the back door left ajar.

Will was nowhere to be found.

Dessert

Chapter Summary

Here it is, folks! The end! Enjoy :)

"I'm sorry to have bothered you like this Hannibal." Alana frowned, still shaking with adrenaline fading from her veins. "I honestly thought he was getting better and then he just--" With her chin resting in her hands, she watched the red and blue lights fade into the distance, her former patient handcuffed in the backseat.

"He fooled us all, Alana, not just you." Hannibal patted her shoulder comfortingly before tucking a blanket around her. "I'm sure Randall with thrive under Doctor Chilton's care. Tea?" Alana nodded and pulled the small blanket tightly around herself.

Hannibal pulled a silver teapot onto the front burner of the stove and lit the gas. He leaned a hip against the counter and watched his colleague as the water heated.

"I just hope he gets the help he needs. You know him, Hannibal. He's a good kid, he's just so confused. I can't thank you enough for talking him down. I don't think I've ever been so scared before. How did he know where I lived?"

Hannibal sighed and shook his head. "When one is determined enough to do something, I find that little can stand in their way. Maybe from another patient or student, we'll likely never know." The teapot whistled, causing Alana to jump.

"I may need a therapist of my own now," she joked, rising from her seat. "Know any reputable ones?"

Smirking, Hannibal plucked a teabag from a nearby canister, placing it in a floral mug and poured in the steaming water. "Lucky for you, I know many." He watched as Alana rounded the corner of the kitchen island.

"Are you giving me a referral, doctor? No opening in your schedule for an old friend?" she half joked, letting the blanket fall from her shoulders. She reached over and placed a hand on Hannibal's chest.

"I always have time for you, Alana," the doctor said, handing over the mug. Their fingers brushed innocently as she smiled.

Shaking with rage, Will stood in the snow outside Alana's window. He watched Hannibal maneuver around his teachers kitchen with a familiar ease that made his guts twist. The way he comforted her, draping the blanket over her small shoulders, making her tea. Touches that belonged to *him* were being wasted on the person who rudely interrupted earlier that night. When Hannibal smiled at her and grazed his fingers over hers, he saw red.

"I heard you were seeing one of my students for therapy," Alana said as he blew steam from the top of her mug. Hannibal raised an eyebrow. "Will Graham," she clarified. "He mentioned it after class last week."

Hannibal hummed. "Yes. Smart boy, that one."

Alana clasped her mug with both hands and sighed. "I think I made him angry. I asked him a personal question and he all but lashed out at me. I know this borders on doctor/patient confidentiality, but please tell me you're helping him. I can't stand the thought of another boy being sent to Chilton.

"I promise. We've already worked through many issues." The doctors eyes never left Alana's as he smiled. "Isn't that right, Will?"

Alana's eyebrows pinched together in confusion. "Hannibal, what---"

"Oh yes," Will snarled from the doorway. Alana whipped around, a gasp caught in her throat. "There's just one more *problem* I need your help with, doctor." Will cocked his head to the side, regarding his terrified teacher. His hands were red and shaking from the cold, his hair blown wild from the wind. He looked like a feral cat ready to pounce.

Alana began to slink away from the counter only to be held in place by Hannibal. "And what might that be, my dear boy?" he asked, letting his nose run gently through the teachers hair.

Will took a large step forward, crowding into Alana's personal space. His eyes dragged over her face, reveling in the fear he caused her. "I'm pretty sure you already know the answer to that." His hand flew up to his teachers throat, gripping it hard enough to make her squeal. Her eyes bulged and watered, her fingers scratched at his face leaving a red, dripping line before Hannibal held them tightly behind her back. "I saw you," he whispered, leaning in so his nose brushed against Alana's. "The touching. The flirting. You shouldn't touch what doesn't belong to you, Alana." His grip tightened around her throat, the sound of crunching cartilage sounded like music in his ears.

"Will. Not like this," Hannibal cooed from behind the woman. Will's wild eyes made their way to Hannibal's face. "Let me show you."

The drive back to Hannibal's house was drenched in silence. They carried Alana down to the basement and strung her up using a large hook already installed in the ceiling. Hannibal removed her clothes clinically as Will stood back and watched.

"I know you've watched me do this many times," Hannibal explained, "but tonight is about you." He turned and regarded Will, frowning at his demeanor. "What's wrong?"

Will clenched his jaw and stared at his unconscious teacher. "I'm not like you, Hannibal. I--- I'm messy. You're precise and methodical. I'm more," Will rolled his head, neck cracking twice, "savage."

Hannibal walked over to Will and rested his palms on the side of his neck. "My dear boy, do you think I don't know this?" He watched as Will's eyes widened and raised an eyebrow. "You think you're the only one stalking strangers in the night?" Leaning forward, Hannibal dragged his nose through the curls covering Will's ear. "You're a marvel my boy," he whispered. "A vicious, unyielding beast that I have no intention to tame. Merely enjoy."

Will shuddered as Hannibal left his side. He followed the doctor to a silver table covered in medical equipment and plastic sheets. Beside them, a black leather case. Hannibal ran his fingers gently down it.

"I took the liberty, I hope you don't mind." Hannibal flipped open the case, revealing five silver blades in varying sizes along with a corkscrew. Will chuckled, running his fingers over the last item.

"You know that was a one time thing. I was unprepared and grabbed the first thing I got my hands on," he said picking up the corkscrew.

"I know. But seeing you drive it into the back of that pigs neck was the most glorious thing I've witnessed." Hannibal's hand reached out to run through Will's hair when Alana began groaning. Smiling, Hannibal turned to his mentee. "Good evening, Alana."

Her eyes scanned the room, her senses slowly coming back to her. "Han---" her voice hoarse and crackling. "Hannibal. What's going on?" she whispered. She dropped her chin and looked at her naked form, immediately pulling on the shackles and trying to get her toes to grip the floor. Tears sprung from her eyes as she watched Will approach her. "Will," she breathed out, "please. Help me."

Will cocked his head to the side and smirked. "Now why would I do a thing like that, Alana? I'm the one who wants you right where you are." He prowled up to her, slowly twirling the corkscrew in his palm. He leaned in and whispered close to her ear, her floral shampoo filling his senses, "You're gonna wish it was him killing you, though. He's quick. Clean and easy. Not me. I like to watch them bleed," he hissed. He pressed the tip of the corkscrew under her right breast and slid it ever so slowly towards her ribs. Alana cried out and jerked away from the pain, only to swing back and pierce herself on the sharp metal. Will shoved in deeper,

feeling it carve into her rib and watched the pain blossom across her face. Pulling it out slowly, he turned to Hannibal who was watching him with wrapped attention. He licked his lips and took in the state of his therapist- eyes wide, fists balled at his sides, and a thick outline of his growing erection against his leg. Will's heart sped up and instantly didn't care about torturing his teacher.

He turned to the whimpering woman and frowned. "Apologies, Ms. Bloom. We have to cut this short, there are more pressing matters at hand." Her eyes slid shut as tears ran down her face. Will walked over to the table and carefully slid out a knife ordinarily used for gutting fish. Turning back to her, he quickly stepped up and gripped her face hard with his free hand. "Open your eyes, Alana. I want to see it."

Trying to shake off his iron grip, Alana clenched her eyes shut harder. "S-s-see what?" she said through the pain shooting through her jaw and rib.

"The moment you cease to exist. I want to watch the light leave your eyes because it's mine now. Your life is mine," he hissed.

Alana's eyes flew open at the statement and opened her mouth to scream, only to be silenced by the swing of a blade across her throat. Hot, pulsing blood sprayed across Will's face, chest and stomach in a red waterfall. His chest heaved as he opened his mouth, letting it coat his tongue and stain his teeth.

Alana jerked, her throat constricting and filling with blood. Will's hand, still wrapped tightly on her face, pulled her closer and stared into her eyes. He watched her gaze turn from fear to a far away stare as she slowly bled out and died in his hand. Will dropped the knife and let go of the dead woman in front of him before he turned to Hannibal.

"We should harvest her soon. Before the meat spoils," he murmured, looking almost shy as Hannibal stared. He moved towards the table at the same time Hannibal crowded up in his personal space. Will felt trembling hands grip his hair at the back of his neck painfully and cried out. "Hannibal," he hissed.

"Never mind the meat," he breathed out heavily. "You have ten seconds before I begin hunting you, boy. I suggest you be quick."

Understanding flashed in Will's eyes. He ripped himself from Hannibal's grip and fled for the stairs, looking back to see if his therapist was keeping true to his word. He was rewarded with the sight of Hannibal holding a tuft of hair ripped from his own skull to his nose, inhaling deeply. Groaning, Will shouldered open the door and fled into the dark house above.

Running. It always comes down to this.

Running from and to him at the same time. His blood soaked feet slip across the white tile floor leaving the perfect trail for the shadow to follow.

Already bloody, his cheeks burn with desire and exertion.

There's no moon tonight. It's dark in the house and the curtains are drawn. He needs to rely on what he's seen before in the night's he's stalked the monster from outside.

He hears the basement door slam open and heavy footsteps rapidly approach the bottom of the stairs.

"Will," he monster hisses from below.

He's running full force now and takes a hard right only to slam into a marble table. He topples over it, landing on his back and smashing his head against the floor.

The footsteps are deafening, then there's nothing.

Nothing but the shadow of a man cast on the wall across from him. He can see it prowling closer, inch by inch.

He climbs to his hands and knees, face angling up uncomfortably to look his monster in the face. It smiles, wicked and tempting before hauling him to his feet.

They're face to face, finally. Finally he can see him for what he truly is- a mirror image of himself in the shadows eyes.

The shadow leans in close. He can feels it's breath against his skin and shivers as it's tongue licks broad stripes under his jaw and up his cheek. It stops for a moment, leaving a single kiss on his temple before he breathes out the word Will has been waiting for.

"Delicious."

Clothes are ripped from their bodies, buttons scattering through the bedroom. The large four-poster bed is suddenly under Will's back and his cock is surrounded by warmth.

He groans into it, his fingers buried in silky hair as he fucks hard into Hannibal's mouth.

"Yes," he hisses loudly. Hannibal's fingers reach up and collect the still warm blood on Will's chest and neck and quickly shove them between the younger mans legs. He cries out when the first bloody finger slides roughly into his hole and pants harshly at the welcome abuse. "More," he demands, and Hannibal is quick to comply.

Slick and tacky, Hannibal opens Will on three fingers before stroking his neglected cock with the remnants. He gathers blood and sweat from the dip between Will's collarbones and slicks himself with it before forcing himself inside Will's aching hole.

"Fuck," Will moans, feeling full. "You're perfect," he hisses. "My perfect monster."

Hannibal fucks him hard and deep, watching as the blood drips from Will's hair onto his perfect white sheets. He drops to his elbows, encasing Will, before taking hold of the boys hair and jerking his head to the side. "You're mine. I am yours," he grunts, sucking a bruise on Will's red soaked neck. He licks and licks until there's nothing left before moving his mouth to Will's. Blood smears across their tongues and lips, claiming each other in life and death.

Will snakes his hand between their bodies and whines when his cock jerks in his hand. "Hannibal," he warns. He feels the man above him nod just before he bites his shoulder, breaking the skin and releasing a fresh wave of blood between them. Will cries out and comes between them, smearing it across Hannibal's writhing body.

Hannibal rears his head back, saliva and blood glistening in the low light of the moon that's streaming through the curtain. He snarls, snaps his hips once more before coming deep inside the man below him.

For a moment, the only sound is their heavy breathing and the steady dripping of blood far below them in the basement.

There are no words spoken as they slide beneath the ruined covers. No words are needed.

The shadows dance across the walls, casting comforting monsters as Will drifts peacefully to sleep.

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